

European NGO confederation  
for relief and development



Confédération européenne des ONG  
d'urgence et de développement

FOR A NEW NARRATIVE ON  
THE FUTURE OF THE  
MEDITERRANEAN:  
A PERSPECTIVE  
FROM SOUTHERN EUROPE

February 2015

## INTRODUCTION

This brief discussion paper by the Southern Europe Concord platforms is an attempt to put forth a new narrative for Mediterranean Human Development and for a change in European Union (EU) policies. It is to be presented to the different stakeholders, and outlines a series of considerations and recommendations, with special attention paid to the role of the European Union as far as the Mediterranean basin is concerned.

The new narrative begins with an understanding and interpretation of the current Mediterranean scenario. In fact, common features exist in both the North and South Mediterranean. Violations of human rights, increased injustice and inequalities, precariousness and unemployment (especially for young adults and women), exploitation of workers in informal markets, natural resource depletion and an increasing rate of disasters due to climate change are spreading throughout Mediterranean countries. Conflicts are multiplying, from the Israeli-Palestine conflict, to Libya, Syria and Iraq causing death and great flows of displaced people. The Mediterranean however should be a beacon for the world, with wonderful natural landscapes, sustainable ways of life, and inter-cultural peaceful relations. In this sense the Tunisian democratic process is a good example to nurture sentiments of hope. This is the Mediterranean we all want.

The neo-liberal development model, in collusion with financial and political oligarchies, continues to produce human and environmental exploitation through financial speculation, unfair trade and the privatization of common goods and services. This failed model is socially and environmentally unsustainable and has resulted in the economic crisis. Yet it is still alive and kicking because of the weakness in socially responsible and environmentally sustainable market reforms. The political sphere continues to be subjugated by neo-liberal market ideologies disseminated by strong national and transnational elites. Islamic radicalisation and terrorism is the violent and bad reaction to this ideology, causing more deaths and despair.

New hopes arose with the Arab Spring uprisings but the transition processes are extremely delicate and the fledgling democracies and movements are crisis-prone. Crises within democracies are also spreading in South Europe in which xenophobia and nationalism are eroding the united Europe ideal.

This scenario requires a new narrative for re-localizing the development discourse in the Mediterranean. A radical shift towards a more coherent human rights-based approach to development is urgent.

A deep revision of the EU policy framework is needed. Policies of austerity without fiscal justice, solidarity and sustainable development interventions have a strong negative social impact in South European countries. Welfare conditions are worsening, as is social and territorial cohesion. The Union for the Mediterranean is in deadlock and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is wholly inadequate given the changing political environment of South Mediterranean countries and societies.

The “more for more” approach and the so-called 3M incentives (Money, Market and Mobility) of the ENP are based on a Eurocentric and neo-liberal ideology, and are inefficient because of internal ambiguities and contradictions. Incoherencies persists between external and internal EU policies, especially regarding the human mobility issue, producing human tragedies along the borders. Trade and investment liberalization policies are undermining local economies as well as the diversification

and stability of internal markets on both sides of the Mediterranean, and are exacerbating the present social, economic and environmental crisis.

On the other hand social movements, youth organisations, local producers, and citizens, are trying to re-construct social and economic cohesion at the territorial level. New social economic districts, local sustainable value chains, welfare communities, and participative democracies are growing and demanding political change.

The EU should radically change its policy framework. The ENP should adopt a new “more for more” integrated in the new Global Agenda for Sustainable Development Post-2015 and based on 3D: Democracy, Decent work and territorial, human, and environmentally friendly Development. The 3Ds may function as the basic driving principles for the implementation of real 3M incentives: more money for and to societies, fair and sustainable markets, and functional mobility pathways.

In order to shape such an approach, more investment should be directed according to the subsidiarity principle to people, civil society organisations, trade unions, and social enterprises. The rising Social Forum and new Med networks of CSOs for Democracy, Decent work and territorial human Development should become central partners in designing and implementing a renovated ENP.

Within such a framework, South European Concord platforms would be interested in considering a proposal that would set up a new cohesion policy at the Mediterranean level put forward by the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly. CSOs and local authorities should closely collaborate in strengthening democracies providing a bottom-up effort for a change in Mediterranean governance.

New territorial policies should be implemented at the rural and urban levels, aimed at creating decent work and sustainable production and consumption patterns. Transnational and decentralised cooperation should be supported in order to foster strong linkages among social communities. Migrants, as actors participating actively in local communities at the social, economic and political levels through their initiatives and projects, should be recognized as such in these policies.

More coherence must be enforced between EU policies related to trade, investment and human mobility. Such policies should be based on a human rights approach and on a new participatory mechanism that assesses the impact of engaging local communities and taking into account the growing capacity of local and regional communities to address their rights and needs through ownership and subsidiarity. The private sector could play an important role as long as they internalize social and environmental costs and standards in their activities and implement participatory governance mechanisms in decision-making. In the same way, trade and investment liberalization frameworks such as Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreements must be rethought giving way to new partnership negotiations where the promotion of human rights and the safeguarding of the environment are core goals and where the social dialogue between governments, trade unions, social and diaspora organizations, the private sector and concerned institutions becomes the new method of implementation. Mobility Partnerships should change to enhance people's mobility and facilitate their entry in the labour markets through decent work. Finally, a radical transformation of the financial market should be implemented establishing the primacy of democracies and of human rights.

## 1. SOCIAL & ECONOMIC STATUS (INEQUALITY, YOUNG ADULTS, RIGHT TO WORK, GENDER)

The South Mediterranean is still excessively afflicted by multiple layers of inequalities that caused several countries to rise up and initiate revolutionary cycles in 2011.

- **Social and economic inequalities:** wealth is still being captured by a small proportion of the population, which in most cases retains a double monopoly on the economy and on politics. Power is still held by a few, with the protection of devoted regimes increasing exclusionary processes, and making it far more difficult for bottom-up private initiatives to succeed.
- Workers are still facing inadequate **labour standards** within the formal economy while major sectors such as agriculture, craft, small industry and small and middle local services are still relegated to the informal economy. Workers in the informal economy lack access to social protection and decent work standards not to mention unemployment benefits. ILO convention ratification rates remain low in the region. Core conventions on freedom of association, labour rights and non-discrimination are poorly implemented, whereas legal restrictions and violations remain widespread while the implementation of enforcement mechanisms are weak.
- The provision for **social welfare** is one of the largest challenges in the region. Access to quality public services for all needs to be greatly improved, especially for the poorest who are still excluded from basic human rights such as health, education or even water access.
- **Territorial inequalities:** unbalanced distribution of infrastructure. Few local territories have adequate infrastructure development, and at the same time many internal and rural regions are left far behind. This encourages massive rural forced migration towards growing cities creating new poverty belts made of slums all around the city centers, which in turn lead to major urban and environment challenges for the future. Governments and local authorities lack the know-how and local expertise for territorial and urban management.
- **Youth** - Representing more than 50% of the population, young adults are facing multiple issues of various type (citizenship, social and economic integration, freedom of expression, etc.). The MENA region has the highest levels of youth unemployment in the world: 23,6 % in the Maghreb and 24% in the Mashrek region (greater than 31% in Tunisia). Youth policies lack coordination; efforts are being wasted most of the time in diverging directions by different ministries, sometimes creating contradictory situations. Arab countries are seeing the largest waves of youth entering the labour markets in their history (80s baby-boomers). Growth levels and the formal economy are not sufficient to absorb such a huge number at this time.  
Young adults are feeling frustrated and excluded from exercising their civic, economic and social rights. They have been at the center of the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, yet ensuring that this does not become a lost generation will be a major challenge.  
Youth unemployment and insecurity affects the North Mediterranean countries as well. In the Western Balkans, unemployment is at 50% of young adults, while it is at 30% in Greece, southern Italy and Spain. Precariousness reduces their hopes for the future and their possibilities to participate in and build new societies and democracies. Criminal

organisations and corruption flourish while migration remains the only opportunity for changing their lives.

### **Recommendations:**

The overall recommendation: **prioritise policies that truly tackle the roots of inequality in the Mediterranean.**

Specific recommendations include the following:

- The current economic model in the region cannot sustain the status quo. A new model must include strong **standards for social protection**, respect for workers' and migrant workers' rights, **social and civic dialogue** and inclusive development.
- Support for CSO contexts that enable the creation and implementation of processes that lead to greater democratic governance and watchdog activities in the region.
- Strong support **for the creation of an environment that encourages local formal economies** in order to reduce the breadth of the informal economy. This must specifically address **social economy policies**, standards and structures. A formal and structured local social economy is a development tool for the poorest people and the poorest territories.
- Prioritise cooperation and encourage **decentralized cooperation for the poorest territories** (forgotten territories) in MENA countries, in order to reduce territorial inequalities.
- Prioritise support **for youth integration programmes**, through a global and coherent approach including education, employment and social integration strategies.
- Fight against all forms of discrimination against women in the region. **Gender mainstreaming should be integrated into all ENP programmes and projects.**

## **2. MIGRATION & MOBILITY for SHARED, SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT in the MEDITERRANEAN**

European Union policies must focus on **people and their rights**. The EU and member states must carry out their actions according to the **EU foundational values**: peace, justice, sustainable development, solidarity, eradication of poverty and protection of human rights. Immigration policy has become increasingly important in national agendas and in the EU over the last decade. The increased influx of migrants has raised concern in the EU and its member states on how best to manage migratory flows. The complicated and fragmented immigration system of European countries attempts to open channels for the regular migration of professionals. However, it risks creating a class of low-skilled 'guest workers' who are called in temporarily but can be sent home or become undocumented when they are no longer needed. On the other hand, schemes for highly skilled workers – including the Blue Card – are often too restrictive in their requirements and contain no incentives for migrants to resettle in their countries of origin - after a period of work in

the EU - under good conditions, including the portability of social security and pension rights acquired in the EU. As a result, foreign-trained skilled workers - like for example non EU nurses, but increasingly also southern European nurses working in northern EU countries - often work in the private sector, under temporary contracts, at lower wages and with less social protection than their native colleagues. The presence of migrants is not always recognized as a potential benefit for European economic and welfare systems, despite the fact that it is a response to the demographic issues that UE is facing. In particular, skilled migrants represents *de facto* an unintended 'subsidy' to our region in the form of skilled professionals ready to work, coming with no training costs attached. Similarly, the impact of this migration in terms of "brain drain" from countries of origin is not analysed, nor are compensation measures considered. In the same time, the benefits from "brain gain" on countries of origin, when migrants transfer back new skills and knowledges are not assessed either. The impact of remittances is important for the welfare of the families but it is not enhanced in sustainable development schemes.

On the other hand, the awareness of the root causes of migration has opened up the possibility of a new global approach to migration and mobility. The nexus between development and migration should be at the heart of the new approach, centered on migrants' rights and involving all stakeholders in its definition and implementation, including civil society and migrant organizations. The Mediterranean represents a central space in the geopolitics of migration and development. In response, the EU and its member states have adopted policies and measures that focus primarily **on security** rather than on **the protection and respect of human rights**. Human tragedies along the EU borders and especially in the Mediterranean reveal the unsustainability and irresponsibility of the relationships among the governments. EU is trying to externalize the control of migration flows in neighbourhood countries, constructing the image of a fortress Europe. A radical shift should be promoted for framing migration within a common human development discourse in the Mediterranean and African areas, combating fears of supposed invasions and xenophobia.

### Recommendations:

- The EU must set up mechanisms that effectively ensure the respect of human rights regardless of migratory status and the proper **identification of those in need of protection at the EU's outermost borders, and it must ensure that this protection is provided. In addition, independent oversight of border actions must be organized to ensure that human rights and access to asylum are respected.** Where a Member State does not respect its obligations under the international and European legal instruments such as the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, the Commission, as the "Guardian of the Treaties", should then start an infringement procedure. The **Dublin regulation** must be changed recognizing the human rights of asylum seekers in re-joining their families and communities wherever they live. **New humanitarian corridors, protection and resettlement programmes** should be implemented whose responsibility must be shared among the EU member states, putting a true and effective **European asylum system in place**. The possibility to apply for protection measures in origin or transit countries at EU Member States' diplomatic/consular missions should be attentively considered. The system should be extended to southern Mediterranean countries. All local governments must become responsible for guaranteeing

the rights of refugees.

- **The EU must ensure the coherence between development and immigration policies**, so that development aid is not used as a way to control migratory flows but is rather used for human development and against the causes of forced displacement. In that sense it would be very important to provide for the adequate **participation of migrants** in the development of their country through capacity building programs, to promote **multilateral and regional cooperation** in immigration policy and to encourage south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation on this issue. Furthermore, coherence must be enforced between migration, trade, investment and finance in a comprehensive human development approach. **Mobility partnerships** should be integrated with trade and investment agreements. More space for the freedom of movement should be promoted while more attention should be devoted to controlling trade and finance, integrating social and environmental responsibilities in corporate behaviours, and ensuring the respect for local producers and cultures.
- **Opening effective channels for regular migration and integration in the labour markets, enhancing the capacities of migrants, their skills and brains, to contribute to human development in destination and origin countries** . The EU should monitor and enforce the **respect of human rights within its Member States** by increasing vigilance against abuses in working conditions which are often perpetrated against migrant workers due to their vulnerability which also, given the widespread unemployment in the region, increasingly affect EU citizens migrating from one Member State to another as well.

The EU immigration system should be more harmonized and oriented towards enhancing the role of migrants for human development in destination and origin countries. **The single permit and Blue Card directives** should be improved in that sense. Regular migration should be encouraged by giving the possibility of entry to migrant workers in all EU Member States as **job seekers**. This would also reduce the entry points of organized crime or of criminal mechanisms (such as the market of false employers) born out of the inconsistencies of too restrictive laws, and would consequently reduce abuses and human rights violations.

Mobility partnerships should support countries of origin where potential migrants should receive adequate and competent assistance in terms of an analysis of the legal entry possibilities in the EU and **orientation toward the European labour market** (supply and demand for jobs), in order to best evaluate the chances of success of a migration.

In the cases of countries losing a large number of skilled workers through brain drain, **aid** can become an element of a larger dialogue looking at **compensating** that loss, and at improving the local labour market. It could also support and encourage migrant initiatives in their countries of origin (local development projects, transfers of skills or remittance). Furthermore, the EU should develop **a comprehensive return programme** for migrant workers who want to return to their countries of origin, based on the competencies acquired in the European job market, which in turn provide value to local development. **Portability of social security** should be ensured for all migrant workers who are willing to resettle in their countries of origin.

Migrants should be empowered for their own human, social and economic/financial development, which in turn benefits origin countries. Migrants should find an enabling environment in destination and origin countries for their cooperation with local communities and local authorities. **Diasporas** must be acknowledged by central states and dialogue mechanisms should be implemented. A European harmonization process for assuring the **political participation and citizenship** of migrants should be promoted.

The human right of **family reunification** must be respected as well as the need to support divided families, unaccompanied minors, and women with children, through new transnational welfare and family-friendly systems. A new “family to family approach” based on transparency, ethics and trust could be envisaged for unaccompanied minors in accordance with the best interest of the child on the basis of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

- To immediately **stop the forced return to a third country**, especially when the human rights of migrants are not effectively protected, thereby upholding the **non-refoulement principle and ensuring that cooperation agreements** with third countries, be they concluded by the EU or by a Member State, **contain effective human rights guarantees**. In order to promote the strengthening of migrants’ rights, civil society of both sides should be involved in the conclusion of these agreements and it is very important that EU member states ratify the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*.
- **Increase efforts to end the trafficking** of human beings, **particularly of women and children** for sexual exploitation, ensuring adequate protection for the victims.

### 3. ENVIRONMENT

*"It is, above all, at the edge of the sea that the pretensions of sovereignty cease and the fact of a shared biosphere begins, more strongly with each passing decade, to assert its inescapable reality."*  
**Only One Earth (1980)**

The European Union, through its southern member states, is a key actor in the Mediterranean region. These states are responsible for ensuring the just, equitable and sustainable use of the area's natural resources and ecosystems. The Mediterranean Sea represents the meeting point of the cultural and historical diversity of European, North African and Middle Eastern societies. The European Union must cultivate an environment favourable for the development of a shared Mediterranean vision; one that ensures the ecological sustainability of its terrestrial and marine ecosystems, while supporting the attainment of improved living conditions with respect to human dignity in each country.

The most challenging environmental issues impinging on human development in the Mediterranean region, such as water scarcity, overfishing, unregulated coastal urbanization and marine pollution are common to the entire region, though unequally distributed. The response to them must be integrated and regional, in accordance with the principles of policy coherence for development and based on ecosystem and human rights-based approaches.



## Recommendations:

- The European Union must ensure that the revision of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, under the UNEP – Mediterranean Action Plan and the Barcelona Convention, incorporates the emerging sustainable development agenda (post-2015 negotiations), based on the principles of universality and policy coherence for development and following an ecosystem and human rights-based approach. The UNEP/MAP is pro-actively reviewing its Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development in line with the Post-2015 negotiations.
- The European Union must support and actively facilitate the elaboration and mainstreaming of the new Sustainable Development agenda, currently under negotiations, across all the institutions governing the Mediterranean region. The emerging SDG agenda provides an opportunity to address the fragmented institutional framework in the Mediterranean region, particularly with respect to the UNEP/ Mediterranean Action Plan, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO), the Union for the Mediterranean (EU), Euro-Med Partnership (EU) and Sustainable Med (WB/GEF).
- The European Union and its member states should meaningfully support and reinstate their commitment to long-standing regional multilateral institutions governing the conservation of the Mediterranean’s natural environment (UNEP/MAP) and the sustainable use of living marine resources (FAO/GFCM).
- The European Union should actively promote the adoption and ratification of International and regional agreements, such as the Water Convention, among Mediterranean countries. The adoption of International treaties would provide a framework for diplomacy on water-related issues and would promote the involvement of stakeholders. (Mediterranean Civil Society Statement to the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water (Dead Sea, 22 December 2008)).
- The European Union policies must integrate the emerging sustainable development agenda, with open and active civil society participation, in the Union for the Mediterranean, the ENP and ENPI and in all other policy areas having an impact on the Mediterranean region. (Personal, inspired by MOI-ECSDE).
- The European Union must ensure that its environmental policies and processes have a strong Mediterranean emphasis which is coherent with the region’s multilateral organisations. The European Union’s environmental policies are often used as institutional/methodological blueprints for the elaboration of environmental policy in the Mediterranean, defeating the principle of regional cooperation. The formulation of European Environmental policies ought to reflect the particularities of the Mediterranean region. (Inspired by MOI-ECSDE and Scoullos and Ferragina).
- With respect to the accession of countries, the European Union must ensure that their process of accession is regionally coordinated, while systematically promoting the inclusion of neighbouring non-accession countries in the Mediterranean. The country-by-country process of accession to the European Union leads to cross-border environmental disputes resulting from the alteration of environmental standards. (Scoullos and Ferragina).

## 4. TRADE AND PRIVATE SECTOR

In a European context where democracies are being weakened by the hegemony of economic and financial powers over political ones, the private sector (in Busan 2011) was officially included as a new actor in development cooperation. Also, the EU Commission recently called for a “Stronger Role of the Private Sector in Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Countries” in a specific Communication<sup>i</sup>.

1. In fact, by creating wealth and being in an essential position to fight tax evasion and corruption, the private sector can play a significant role in fighting poverty, social injustices, and inequalities that reduce human dignity. Private sector must be recalled in its proper function of contribution to job generation, because the Mediterranean region “needs jobs with social dignity rather than jobs that come at the expense of dignity”<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, private sector engagement should initially assess the labour structure, needs and necessities, and then together with national actors (including governments, labour unions, civil society etc.) design programmes that will meet the social and economic aspirations of the people.

For these reasons, a strong and comprehensive framework needs to be put in place. The EU Commission *communique*<sup>1</sup> lists six criteria for using public funds to leverage private sector engagement, covering factors such as the developmental impact and ‘additionality’ of projects, the disbursement procedures, and the adherence to social, environmental and fiscal norms. But the *communique*<sup>1</sup> lacks specific information on how the criteria will be monitored and evaluated, or what penalties will apply if they are violated. Also the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* failed to make any specific recommendations on how to proceed towards international binding regulations for transnational corporations but relied instead primarily on voluntary actions by corporations<sup>ii</sup>. It lacks a mandate for the follow-on mechanism to examine allegations of business-related abuse and to evaluate gaps in legal protections, an aspect stressed by civil society groups from around the world.

Poverty, inequalities, unemployment, informal sectors, marginalization, deindustrialization, land grabbing and rural deprivation are the result of the “structural adjustment” model implemented with the aim of a better integration in the global and regional trading system. The shift from rentier nonproductive to real economies necessitates macroeconomic choices and strategies to enhance productivity and competitiveness; this is not only the result of improving the capacities and providing resources but it relies mainly on the enabling environment. The latter should favor productive capacities by stimulating productive sectors including industrialization and manufacturing, agriculture and services. These important objectives can be realized only by stimulating the strategic sectors with value added, who are able to create sustainable and productive jobs, able to compete and address domestic and regional markets. In fact, growth led and export led investments didn’t help the Arab countries to overcome developmental challenges. Structural reforms are also needed in the trading system, in order to move from the principle of the open-market to the concept of Strategic Integration, which maintains a necessary margin for countries at the level of policy-making (related to trade), allowing them to support productive sectors, to create required jobs and to advance national development priorities. DCFTAs, for instance, are considered as a tool for economic growth by the EU, without proper attention to the critical issues raised. The DCFTA process will Morocco<sup>2</sup> address areas that are at the heart of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/02/06/264749.html>

<sup>2</sup> the first country to move forward in negotiations

shaping the structure of the national Moroccan economy, and may directly affect Morocco's ability and sovereignty in terms of regulating the economy in line with national development goals. The active participation of the different social actors should take into consideration their ability to hold the decision makers accountable to their commitments. This requires their independence and availability of permanent channels of consultation and a structured dialogue. Yet, this participation should not be limited to monitoring and evaluation but also to the active participation in the preparations of the public policy making. This participation should insure the integration of the different interests of the various actors.

## Recommendations

- As Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz stated in his keynote address to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum on Business and Human Rights in December 2013, in Europe and worldwide “we need international cross-border enforcement, including broader and strengthened laws that give broad legal rights to bring actions which hold companies that violate human rights accountable in their home countries. Soft law —the establishment of norms of the kind reflected in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights— are critical; but they will not suffice. We need to move towards a binding international agreement enshrining these norms. (...)”
- The EU should complete the six criteria for giving private sector actors access to public funds that were introduced in the recent *communiqué* with an appropriate monitoring and impact measurement framework to assess the performance of the private sector in public-private collaboration, not just measuring their financial performance, but evaluating their *ex ante* and *ex post* social, economic and environmental performance.
- The EU should strictly implement the existing Guiding Principles, for instance requesting national action plans and effective state-based regulatory and judicial mechanisms from Member states, including the development of a more effective focus on extraterritorial obligations.
- Europe should support the implementation of the initiative taken by the Government of Ecuador which in September 2013 delivered a statement at the 24th session of the Human Rights Council asking for “the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on the basis of a careful and serious assessment of options available in the framework of the Human Rights Council”. In addition to Ecuador, the statement was signed also by the African Group, the Arab Group, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Kyrgyzstan, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Venezuela and Peru, some of the key partners of EU development cooperation programs and trade initiatives<sup>iii</sup>.
- Arab civil society rightly warns that the EU's trade and investment policy will not bring about the kind of reforms that would promote equity, as they reduce state freedom to decide the orientation of its economic system, with potentially far-reaching social, economic and development implications, given that measures to safeguard universal public services, labour conditions, environmental protection, and even financial stabilization measures etc. come under threat from liberalization, deregulation and privatization. It has sounded the alarm about premature liberalization carrying the risk of deindustrialization and the concentration of production in primary commodities.<sup>iv</sup> International trade and investment agreements must include binding obligations for foreign investors and signatory states to

ensure that foreign investment serves social, environmental and human rights goals. This requires a commitment to firmly embed the regulatory framework for foreign investment in the international framework of social, labour, economic, and human rights and ecological standards. Rights and obligations set out in human rights law and in the respective treaties and agreements,<sup>v</sup> as well as in national laws, must prevail over the privileges of foreign investors. Investors that violate fundamental rights must be held accountable. Affected communities and governments must have the possibility to bring transnational corporations to court.

- EU must acknowledge the fundamentality of reforming and regulating global financial and trade system, at the level of international fora.
- EU is asked to create an enabling environment (namely through complementary investment and institutional policies such as in the area of transport and customs clearance) that respects the right of the countries and regions to give priority to local and regional trade over global trade, namely in basic sectors such as food, water and sanitation, and health and education.
- EU must ensure an enabling environment by assuring effective policy coherence that supports longer-term structural changes and discourages or ultimately restrains the possibility of agreements like the “Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” (TTIP) that will create trade diversion and unfair competition in Mediterranean area, Association Agreements that create “**Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas**” (DCFTA) and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with no reciprocity nor clear rules on possible discrimination.

## 5. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND GLOBAL CITIZENS’ EDUCATION

*“The intercourse between the Mediterranean and the North or between the Atlantic and Central Europe was never purely economic or political; it also meant the exchange of knowledge and ideas and the influence of social institutions and artistic and literary forms.”*

*Christopher Dawson*

Public awareness and Global education are key tools for countries to inform people and to rebuild their citizens’ engagement in political and social issues.

The European Elections of 2014, with a turnout of 43%, give a clear message about the level of public engagement in Europe. Having a look at the FLASH EUROBAROMETER 373 “**Europeans’ Engagement in Participatory Democracy**”<sup>vi</sup>, co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication in March 2013 we notice that

- **Citizens’ views on non-governmental organisations and associations:** Most respondents feel that NGOs can influence local (75%) and national (70%) decision-making, and to a lesser extent EU-level decision-making (53%). A majority (59%) of people think that NGOs share their interests and values, however, a majority of respondents in five Member States – Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal and Cyprus – say that European citizens do not need NGOs.

- **Effectiveness of different ways of influencing political decision-making:** Roughly seven out of 10 respondents think that voting in local or national elections is an effective way to influence political decisions and a majority of respondents (54%) still think that voting in EU elections or joining an NGO is an effective means of influencing political decision-making.
- **Citizens' engagement in influencing political decision-making:** A third (34%) of respondents say that they have signed a petition in the last two years. However, the proportion of people who have done this ranges considerably, from 53% in the UK to 7% in Cyprus. Other relatively popular forms of engagement are expressing one's views to an elected local representative online, and/or taking part in a public debate at the community level. A fifth of respondents (20%) are members of an organisation with a specific economic, social, environmental, cultural or sporting interest, while the 16% are Trade Union members. The Nordic countries demonstrate a very high level of participation in NGOs and associations, especially Trade Unions. However, in 18 Member States more than half of the respondents say that they have not had any involvement with this type of organisation.

Moreover, the workplace document *Political Trust and Civic Engagement during the Crisis*<sup>vii</sup>, by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2013), states that in most countries trust in both national and European political institutions has been eroded substantially since the onset of the economic crisis. This requires policy actions that address trust both at the national and supranational levels. While the rates of traditional forms of participation (such as attending a meeting or contacting a politician) are decreasing, the new online forms of political expression, such as electronic petitions, are on the rise. This confirms the relevance of an existing European citizens' initiative, and points to a need for further development of the potential for citizen involvement.

In fact, non-engaged citizens are the ones that step away from active participation. It is necessary to fight feelings of frustration and mistrust through transparent information and long and effective education processes. In the short term, DEAR activities will raise the awareness of citizens on global issues, while over the long-term such activities will increase citizens' ownership on global themes, working constantly on their understanding of being part and not external to world global issues.

The Arab springs teach us that informed citizens are engaged and active citizens. We have to capitalize on this experience and develop a higher sense of democratic participation, local engagement and global solidarity. This long process begins in school, and must reach everyone to explain that development is not about "someone down there" but it's about "us, everywhere."

Global citizenship education is recognized as a priority for Public engagement: On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2012 the adoption of the *Written declaration on development education and active global citizenship (0007/2012)* stresses that Development Education plays a key role in the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. It strengthens the support of the active engagement of citizens at local and global levels to promote justice, human rights, and sustainable development. Based on the above, objectives call for the Commission and the Council to develop a long-term, cross-sectoral European strategy for Development Education, awareness-raising and active global citizenship, and for the Member States to develop or strengthen national development education strategies.

Nowadays there is the need to capitalize over the established network of CSOs but also to invest in strengthening cooperation with all those grassroots movements that represents thousands of citizens. Development CSOs have to shift their role from being the ones that speak for, to become the ones that speak with. The Mediterranean area, thanks to its crossroads identity and human, social and cultural variety is the ideal place to shape new concepts and refill the words we use for promoting sustainable development, with strong meanings able to inform, attract and activate citizens in the struggle against poverty and injustice.

Formal and non-formal education should take advantage from the richness of this multicultural environment for the promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and integration.

### **Recommendations**

- We demand a commitment from the Mediterranean countries to sign a paper where policy coherence in development is not only recognized but implemented by the ministries of education of the countries with the adoption of a structured strategy for Global & Development Education.
- We ask from the EU and the national government to recognize the importance of enabling CSOs growth and effectiveness with a clear in terms, contents and funds strategy of involvement and support. This will bring to a full recognition of the CSO sector as a third fundamental pillar for shaping common development strategies and strengthening the global citizenship identity into local societies.
- We ask to national governments to support the development of a media sector where independence and plurality are guaranteed. We recommend the commitment of the sector on promoting global issues such as tolerance, inclusion, intercultural learning, participatory democracy, dialogue and solidarity.

## **6. POLICY & GOVERNANCE**

The institutions governing the Mediterranean region have not delivered on the aspirations of the peoples living within the region. The Mediterranean region's institutions are variously criticised of being interest-driven, a criticism levelled for example at the Union for the Mediterranean as initially proposed with its weak legal basis, thus being unable to enforce its policies among signatories, of not supporting civil society's open involvement with access to information and of being fragmented amongst themselves.

The UN institutions responsible for the Mediterranean's environment (UNEP/MAP and GFCM) are engaged in the region based on a multilateral approach, whereas the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy adopts a bilateral approach with non-EU countries along its Eastern and Southern borders. The Union for the Mediterranean, which is in deadlock, provides the only high-level political forum for all Mediterranean countries, even though it also includes non-Mediterranean EU member states.

In terms of democratic governance, the Mediterranean countries and their people risk not achieving their aspirations after the struggles of the Arab Spring. Several civil movements are still struggling to gain political power over the military and economic elite in their countries. In Syria for example the aspirations of the people turned into a state of civil war, and the historical injustices towards the Palestinian people still stand unheard. The European Union's response to the Arab spring should have sought to better prioritise the empowerment of civil society organisations across the region for the promotion of democratic governance and should have also ensured that the Principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) formed the basis of the new partnership.

The investment policy of the EU – as laid down in the EU's Member States' bilateral trade and investment treaties and continued in the last mandate of the European Commission to negotiate on investment - has played a key part in this failure – as it was designed exclusively to protect the position of investors and did not take wider public interests into consideration. As such, the EU's trade investment framework is at odds with the call for the protection of peoples' basic economic and social rights and for addressing the fundamental inequalities in the Mediterranean countries. Where the Arab revolutions, in response to the needs of the people, call for more inclusive and sustainable growth and a more equitable distribution of wealth, it becomes obvious that trade and investment policies should be redesigned accordingly.

In 2015 the United Nations General Assembly will be producing a new Global Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD). This cross-cutting agenda will require the mainstreaming of its principles across all institutional and policy spheres. The Mediterranean countries, and their institutions, must view this as an opportunity to discuss and to implement, at the local, national and regional levels, a sustainable development agenda together for the Mediterranean region based on people's aspirations, the human rights-based approach, an enabling environment for CSOs across the region, and the principles of universality and policy coherence for sustainable development.

### **Recommendation**

In support of this vision we call on:

- The **Union for the Mediterranean** to host a high-level Conference on Sustainable Development after agreement at the UN General Assembly of the **post-2015 process** with a view to initiate a region-wide inter-sectoral process aimed at implementing the new SD agenda across all institutions governing the Mediterranean region, based on 3D: Democracy, Decent work and territorial human and environmentally friendly Development.
- The **European Union policies** must integrate the emerging **sustainable development agenda**, with open and active civil society participation, in the Union for the Mediterranean, the ENP and in all other policy entities that have an impact on the Mediterranean region, according to the subsidiarity principle and territorial cohesion approach.
- The European Union must support and actively facilitate the elaboration and mainstreaming of the new **Sustainable Development Agenda**, currently under negotiations, across all the **institutions governing the Mediterranean region**. The emerging SD agenda provides an opportunity to address the fragmented institutional

framework in the Mediterranean region, in particular with respect to UNEP/ Mediterranean Action Plan, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (FAO), the Union for the Mediterranean (EU), Euro-Med Partnership (EU) and Sustainable Med (WB/GEF).

- The European Union should actively promote the adoption and ratification of **International and regional social, cultural and environmental agreements**, such as the International Labour Organisation Conventions and the Water Convention, **by Mediterranean countries**. The adoption of International treaties would provide a framework for diplomacy on water-related issues and would promote the involvement of stakeholders. (Mediterranean Civil Society Statement to the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water (Dead Sea, 22 December 2008)).

- The European Union must establish **PCD mechanisms** under its **European Neighbourhoods Policy** to systematically evaluate the impact of initiatives supported by the EU institutions in the Mediterranean region, while giving any civil society organisation the means to bring cases of incoherence to the attention of the EU.

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